WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Commemorative postage stamps on literary luminaries

†*624. SHRI DEVI PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to release commemorative postage stamps on the great literary Luminaries of the country;

(b) if not, whether Government would consider releasing such postage stamps in the memory of at least those litterateurs of Indian languages who have been honoured with Jnanpith Awards; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Private Sector Investment in Telecom Sector

*625. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the performance of private sector investment in telecommunication sector;

(b) whether Government are satisfied with the performance; and

(c) if not, the details of the measures taken to attract more private sector investment in the telecommunication sector?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (c) The performance of private sector investment in many segments of the telecom sector, particularly after New Telecom Policy, 1999 has been generally satisfactory. The Government has, however, taken a number of measures to attract more private sector investment in the telecommunication sector. Some of the recent initiatives are:—

— Unrestricted competition introduced in the areas of basic, international long distance, national long distance, internet, V-SAT services, etc. In case of cellular mobile telephone service, number of operators in each service area has also been increased to four.

— Internet telephony has been allowed from 1st April, 2002.

— Policy for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has been liberalized. In some of the services like Internet, Infrastructure Providers, Voice Mail/E-mail, Radio paging, manufacturing, etc., FDI beyond 49% has been allowed.

— Electronic Hardware Technology Park (EHTP) Scheme modified to strengthen the indigenous telecom-manufacturing sector.

Compassionate Appointments

*626. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFROMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that dependents of some of the Section Supervisors of the Central Telegraph Office who died in harness in the month of June, 2000, have not been provided with compassionate appointment, so far;

(b) if so, the details of each case alongwith the reasons for the delay; and